

File 16

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Czechoslovakia

REPORT

SUBJECT Match Production

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25 YEAR RE-REVIEW

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1. Prior to World War II, Czechoslovak match production was centralized in three factories: Susice N 49-14, E 13-317, Lipnik nad Bečvou N 49-32, E 17-367, and Banská Bystrica. All three dated from the period before World War I and formerly were a part of Solo, A.G., in Vienna. After the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Czechoslovak Solo, a joint stock company, was set up. Most of the holdings of this Solo company were the property of the United Chemical Works in Prague II. In the autumn of 1938, the name of this company was changed to United Chemical Works; Susice, Lipnik, and Banská Bystrica Plants. The former name Solo was retained as a trade-mark. 25X1
2. When the chemical industry was nationalized in 1945, the match factories were taken away from the United Chemical Works, and were put under the administration of the lumber industry centralized in the newly created Solo National Enterprise with main offices in Susice. The manager of the new enterprise was Ing. HLAVATY, long-time manager of the Susice plant, and a confirmed Communist after World War II. ULMAN, a Communist, was named manager of the Lipnik plant. STEPAN remained as manager of the plant in Banská Bystrica.
3. All three plants were joined with a main railway line by spurs. All had their own boiler facilities. The Susice plant used coal from Sternberk N 49-44, E 17-187, and the Lipnik and Banská Bystrica plants used coal from the Ostrava region. All three plants owned large forest areas which took care of most of the wood needs of the industry.
4. The plants were well equipped and the export of matches to all parts of the world prior to World War II was quite extensive. Czechoslovak matches had a very fine reputation. The main importers were the US, the Balkan countries, the Near and Far East.

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5. Besides matches, the Susice plant also made paper products from hardened paper, such as small containers, wrappers, and aluminum foils. This production was at another factory in Susice and was placed under the administration of the paper industry after World War II. The factory in Lipnik made only matches. The plant in Banska Bystrica retained a small but significant part of chemical production, namely, the manufacture of phosphorus. The match industry did not require any raw materials from abroad; the chemical industry supplied practically all those needed. The paper industry supplied paper for wrapping, etc.
6. The chemical industry had carried on a long battle with the lumber industry for the return of match factories. The chemical industry even threatened to make matches from paper to prove that the wood industry had nothing in common with match production. In the end, however, it was decided to leave the production of matches to the lumber industry.

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